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FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5504  
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY IMMEDIATE 7782  
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT IMMEDIATE 1874  
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE 0059  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK IMMEDIATE 2400  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE IMMEDIATE 2298  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 3450  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 1393  
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KIEV IMMEDIATE 0802  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0757  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 6608  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0063  
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 0675  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 1721  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0070

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TASHKENT 000693

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN, PRM AND DRL  
MOSCOW FOR DHS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2016  
TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: UNHCR OFFICE MAKES CONTINGENCY PLANS

REF: A) TASHKENT 658 B) TASHKENT 520

Classified By: AMB. JON R. PURNELL, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary: The GOU has still not responded to UNDP's proposal to assume some of UNHCR's responsibilities after its closure. UNHCR headquarters has told its office to begin closing down on April 11 if the GOU has still not responded by then. UNHCR's Protection Officer told Poloff that the GOU may announce a decision this evening. Should the GOU refuse to allow the handover to UNDP, UNHCR has requested that the Swiss and British Embassies provide administrative support for refugees awaiting resettlement, and asked us whether we could help with those accepted into the U.S. refugee program. The Swiss Ambassador has reportedly already agreed, while the British Embassy is awaiting a decision from London. End summary.

¶2. (C) UNHCR's Protection Officer Asako Nozawa told Poloff on April 7 that the GOU has still not responded to UNDP's proposal to assume some of its responsibilities (ref A). UNHCR, whose office must close by April 17 (ref B), is continuing to make contingency plans. Nozawa expects a decision could be made tonight, noting that it is "typical Soviet practice" to announce important decisions on late Friday evenings when nobody can react for several days. (Note: The GOU also announced its decision to close UNHCR on the eve of the four-day Navruz holiday. End note.) UNHCR headquarters has instructed its office only to wait for the GOU's response until April 11, before beginning to shut its office and move equipment to Dushanbe and Bishkek.

¶3. (C) In the event that the UNDP proposal is rejected, UNHCR has approached the Swiss and British Embassies and -- to a limited extent the U.S. Embassy -- to assist with refugee resettlement administrative support such as obtaining GOU exit permits, scheduling resettlement interviews, and making travel arrangements. (Note: There are 1700 remaining Afghan refugees, of whom Nozawa estimates that around 700-800 will be re-settled in third countries. The Afghan Embassy

will help to voluntarily repatriate the remainder. End note.) According to Nozawa, the Swiss Ambassador has agreed to provide administrative support for the refugees.

¶4. (C) British Embassy Political Officer Ben Greenwood told the DCM on April 6 that his Embassy was considering UNHCR's request to provide administrative support, and was awaiting a decision from London. (Note: Greenwood added that the British Embassy's staff and physical plant in Tashkent are fairly small, and that its resources would be stretched thin. End note.) Nozawa told Poloff that UNHCR had approached the British Embassy due to its consular responsibilities for Canadian citizens; Canada has agreed to accept 224 asylum seekers, of whom many are married to Uzbeks. (Note: The total number of people Canada will accept is therefore around 400 people. End note.) According to Nozawa, the Canadian Embassy in Moscow preferred that IOM's Tashkent office provide administrative support to the refugees granted asylum, but IOM's Tashkent office is unregistered. (Note: Nevertheless, the GOU has allowed IOM to operate in various areas, including anti-TIP programs).

¶5. (C) Nozawa asked Poloff if the U.S. Embassy would provide administrative support for the refugees granted resettlement in the U.S. (Note: In the recent DHS circuit ride, six out of forty five refugee resettlement cases were approved, or a total of fifteen people. End note.) Nozawa stated that IOM's Moscow office is helping the 39 unsuccessful U.S. refugee resettlement applicants to file appeals. She noted that refugee resettlement seekers will need logistical support in obtaining Uzbek exit visas, and making hotel and plane reservations. She added that U.S. refugee processing,

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including security and medical clearances, can take up to a year, and that IOM's Moscow and Almaty office (both of which are accredited) might be able to provide assistance.

¶6. (C) Comment: We have no problem assisting with administrative support for the fifteen whose refugee resettlement applications to the United States were approved. However, we do not exclude that we may be asked to provide support for more than these fifteen people. If so, we will coordinate with the Department, IOM offices and UNHCR. End comment.

PURNELL